REMARK

Claims 1-14 are in this application with claims 1 and 4 amended herein. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Initially, Applicant's attorneys admit that the communication filed March 10, 1006, contained an inadvertent statement regarding claim 11 and its purported incorporation into claims 1 and 3. This statement was in error as evidenced by the lack of any amended claims with that communication. No such amendment was undertaken or intended by the Applicants.

On the merits, claims 1-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,226,710 to Melchior.

Independent claims 1 has been amended to recite:

> an ancillary storage section having a plurality of ancillary storage
> areas for storing therein the priority ranks different from each
> other, the plurality of ancillary storage areas being associated with
> the plurality of storage areas, respectively, priority rank stored in
> each of the plurality of ancillary storage areas being assigned to the
> associated one of the plurality of storage areas

It is respectfully submitted that Melchior does not teach such a feature, and therefore claim 1 patentably distinguishes over the cited reference and is allowable.

As best understood, Melchior is directed to the management of information subjected to a search by dividing the information into tables. But the relied upon portions of Melchior do not teach what is to be done when there are plural entries including the same keyword in the table. In contrast the present invention predetermines an order of priority to a plurality of entries in order to output pointer information on the entries that were hit in the order of the priority, when there are entries including the same keyword information in a table.

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As recited in claims 1, one aspect of the present invention is to provide storage areas having respective priority ranks assigned thereto and a plurality of ancillary storage areas for storing therein the priority ranks. The "priority ranks" each have a different value. Each ancillary storage area and storage area are associated with each other and the "priority rank" in each ancillary storage area is assigned as a "priority rank" for the storage area. According to one aspect of the claimed invention, when at least one of the storage areas stores therein information which matches a word supplied from an exterior source, the claimed invention outputs pointers of all or part of the storage areas in descending order of priority ranks.

The office action alleges that the configuration data of Melchior corresponds to the priority rank of the instant claims. As best understood Melchior states that a main element of the configuration data are the "specified key width and association width." Further the "specified key width and association width" is data showing the configuration method of tables provided for each table or "RAM storage." (See Figs. 3 and 4). This is clearly distinguishable from values that show the order of priority as recited in the instant claims. The fact that the "specified key width and association width" is included in the configuration data as a main element can be seen from statements in Melchior wherein configuration is called "RAM layout" and is decided by the "specified key width and association width." See col. 12, lines 46-48 "The RAM layout or configuration is determined by the specified key width and association width.")

Further "priority rank" of the instant claims and "configuration data" of Melchior are different in that priority rank according the instant invention relates to a single storage data (what Melchior refers to as "entry") in contrast "configuration data" refers to the entire table including a plurality of entries. Claim 1 states that "priority ranks" are values assigned per storage area

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with the "plurality of storage areas." Each of these "storage areas" are not a table, but rather a single entry in a table. Accordingly configuration data and priority ranks are not the same.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is submitted that independent claim 1, as amended, patentably distinguishes over Melchior and is allowable. Claims 2-14 which depend from claim 1 are allowable therewith.

Conclusion

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper, not fully covered by an enclosed check, may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

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